

G. W. McPherson

The
Virgin Birth

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The VIRGIN BIRTH

By

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YONKERS, N. Y.

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Evangel Movement, New York City.*

This is the second sermon in the series under the general topic, Radicalism Unmasked, as given in the Old Tent Evangel, New York City, August, 1922, in which the author discusses a recent sermon by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick of Union Theological Seminary and minister at the First Presbyterian Church, in which message Dr. Fosdick has attacked the Virgin Birth of Christ and other fundamental truths of Christianity.

"A stand must be made against liberalism if a shred of Christianity is to be left for transmission to the generations to come." Bishop W. A. Candler, Atlanta.



Books by G. W. McPherson:

The Virgin Birth of Christ. (Paper. Single copies, 25 cents; \$7.00 per 100 copies; \$65.00 per 1,000 copies. Carriage extra).

The Crisis in Church and College (Cloth, fifth edition, 262 pages \$1.45. Carriage extra).

The Modern Conflict Over the Bible (Cloth, fifth edition, 222 pages, \$1.45. Carriage extra).

Socialism and the New Theology (paper, Single copies, 25 cents. \$7.00 per 100 copies, \$65.00 per 1,000 copies. Carriage extra).

Radicalism Unmasked (paper). A reply to the attacks upon the miracles by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick and the Right Rev. Howard Chandler Robins, Dean of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York. (Single copies, 25 cents; \$7.00 per 100 copies; \$65.00 per 1,000 copies. Carriage extra).

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VIRGIN BIRTH

By
REV. G. W. McPHERSON

A reply to Dr. Harry Emerson
Fosdick's attack upon the Virgin
Birth of Christ

SPECIAL NOTICE

The author of this message desires to inform the reader that he, with The Old Tent Evangel Committee of New York City and others, have decided to inaugurate a large movement this Fall and Winter, having as its object the establishment of a great university in New York City, to be known as, The International Christian University of New York, with theological and missionary departments.

The writer's experience, covering twenty-five years of exposure of the rationalistic teaching, has convinced him that the greatest need of the churches is such an institution where the Bible, as God's Word, is placed at its center as authority in religious matters.

Thousands of parents have written for information as to a thoroughly sound university where they might send their sons and daughters; but there is no such institution in Protestant America. The enemy has captured our educational institutions. Our timid Christian educators have capitulated, in most cases, to the power of money, and many of those who have endowed our institutions and others have been betrayed.

Orthodox people everywhere should take heroic action or all will be lost. This great object calls for a fund of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000). You are respectfully invited to write us your opinion, and to furnish names of prominent people who are interested in religious education. Let us have faith in God! Shall we not ask of Him great things, and expect great things from Him, and attempt great things for Him?

Sincerely yours in His Name,

G. W. McPHERSON,
34 St. Andrews Place,
Yonkers, N. Y.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The purpose of this, the second message on Radicalism Unmasked, is to discuss the recent attack upon the fundamental truths of the Bible by Prof. Harry Emerson Fosdick of Union Seminary as voiced in his printed sermon entitled: "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" This message will center in his rejection of the Virgin Birth of Christ.

In making the reply to Dr. Fosdick the speaker also has in mind the growing army of rationalists in all our churches and educational institutions.

DR. FOSDICK'S STATEMENT

We may well begin with the vexed and mooted question of the virgin birth of our Lord. I know people in the Christian churches, ministers, missionaries, laymen, devoted lovers of the Lord and servants of the Gospel, who, alike as they are in their personal devotion to the Master hold quite different points of view about a matter like the virgin birth. Here, for example, is one point of view: that the virgin birth is to be accepted as historical fact; it actually happened; there was no other way for a personality like the Master to come into this world except by a special biological miracle. That is one point of view . . . But side by side with them in the evangelical churches is a group of equally loyal and reverent people who would say that the virgin birth is not to be accepted as an historic fact. To believe in virgin birth as an explanation of great personality is one of the familiar ways in which the ancient world was accustomed to account for unusual superiority. Many people suppose that only once in history do we run across a record of supernatural birth. Upon the contrary, stories of miraculous generation are among the commonest traditions of antiquity. Especially is this true about the founders of great religions. According to the records of their faiths, Buddha and Zoroaster and Lao-Tsze and Mahavira were all supernaturally born.

Here then we have Dr. Fosdick's rather labored argument, given to discredit the trustworthiness of the Scripture accounts of the Virgin Birth of Christ. You have noticed in his statement these words:

The two men who contributed most to the Church's thought of the divine meaning of the Christ were Paul and John, who never even distantly allude to the virgin birth.

And,

According to the records of their faiths, Buddha and Zoroaster, and others were all supernaturally born, by which Dr. Fosdick means to affirm, they were supposed to have been virgin-born.

We now ask: Are these statements true? The Virgin Birth of Christ is placed on a level with the births of Buddha, Zoroaster, Plato, Augustus Caesar, and others, the implication being that faith in the alleged virgin births of these pagans is as justifiable as faith in the Virgin Birth of Christ. That is the meaning of this preacher's words, and they are not susceptible of any other interpretation.

BUDDHA

What are the facts, and shall we accept Dr. Fosdick's words as true, and reject the New Testament records as spurious regarding the supernatural conception of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

Dr. Fosdick says that Buddha was claimed to have been virgin-born. I have read a book entitled: "The Message of Buddha," by Subharda Bhikkhu, and edited by J. E. Ellam who is the general secretary of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, in which the author makes no claim for Buddha as having been virgin-born. If there were any such tradition in any of the ancient writings concerning Buddha, this author would not have failed to refer to it. Max Muller, who is recognized as one of the greatest

Western authorities on matters pertaining to Oriental religions, is silent regarding any such claim as having been made by the ancient Buddhists. Dr. James Orr says that in none of the ancient Buddhist writing, for 200 or 300 years after his birth, has anything been found to claim him as virgin-born. Prof. E. L. Goonakara of India, says:

There is not a syllable of truth in Dr. Fosdick's claim for Buddha. No ancient Buddhist writer of note has made any such claim. This has been said of Buddha chiefly by modern Buddhists and Western rationalists who are laboring to rid the Christian people of belief in the supernatural element in the Bible.

Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian author, in his book entitled: "The Great Secret," in which he treats of Oriental religions, lays no claim to Buddha as having been supernaturally or virgin-born. Robert E. Speer confirms the above witnesses. He says:

The stories of the life of Buddha in the Buddhist Scriptures which resemble at all the stories in the Gospels, resemble them in the same way in which medieval legends resemble them, and moreover, they arose long after Buddha's death, (The Light of the World p. 64).

ZOROASTER

As to Zoroaster, Maeterlinck says:

The doubtful incarnations of the Hermes, the Manus, and the Zoroasters cannot be historically verified, (p. 69),

by which he means to affirm that such claims have not come down to us from any of the ancient writings concerning these men.

Maeterlinck reminds his readers that the peoples of various countries

are familiar with the old myth of the child born of a virgin and that the first Jesuit missionary to China discovered that the miraculous birth of Christ had been anticipated by Huf-Ke who lived 3468 before Jesus, (p. 68).

Thus we see there was a myth story of the incarnation of Deity in our humanity, which came down from age to age, and which the authorities tell us probably originated in India, though no one ventures to affirm just when or where it had its origin. It is purely an unverified myth.

From these facts, I think it is quite apparent that Dr. Fosdick's claim for Buddha and Zoroaster and others as having been virgin-born, cannot be substantiated as fact, from any known reliable source or authority, and I Challenge Him to Prove the Contrary from "The Records of their Faith." He says,

according to the records of their faith, these,

and others which he named,

were supernaturally born;

but he submitted no references. Why? Because there are no such ancient records. We may well raise the query: Can a preacher and teacher who will make such a misleading statement and put it in print, and send it broadcast for the purpose of winning others to his views and thus destroying faith in the deity of Christ be trusted when he speaks on other matters which deal vitally with the Christian Religion? This inferential argument to disprove the Virgin Birth of our Lord was made on the basis of the old myth stories and fables, and we must ask: Is this fair treatment of so great a matter? Is it fair to use these myth stories as an argument against the New Testament records, in order to refute or undermine them, and thus destroy the faith of Christians in the Virgin Birth of Christ? While I give no credence to the above myth story, nevertheless it would appear more reasonable for the rationalists to say that this story may be true, namely: that Deity would at some great day in the history of Man become incarnate in our race, and that God, in this way was, in part, preparing the minds of

men, in a prophetic manner, as he did by the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, for the incarnation of His Son, the revelation of His redeeming love, and the salvation of the world. I submit that this would be a more reasonable view for them to take than to use such stories as an argument against the Virgin Birth of Christ, though I do not believe that God had any such purpose in any myth story.

Furthermore, had it been the custom of the ancients to eulogize their national leaders—Augustus Caesar and others—as having been virgin born, this cannot be fairly used as an argument against the Virgin Birth of Christ, for there had never been discovered anything in the lives of those ancient leaders in the Roman Empire to convince any sane person that they were virgin-born. History shows that the intelligent peoples of those times did not themselves accept these stories as true. But the case is entirely different with Christ as we shall show. The question regarding these incarnations of pagan deities in men will be looked into more fully a little later.

WHAT PAUL AND JOHN REALLY SAID:

We shall now examine the statement of Dr. Fosdick regarding the teachings of Paul and John. In order to justify his own disbelief in the Virgin Birth of our Blessed Lord and Savior he says:

Knowing this [referring to what he stated regarding Buddha, Zoroaster and others as being virgin born] there are within the Christian churches large groups of people whose opinion about our Lord's coming would run as follows: those first disciples adored Jesus—as we do; when they thought about his coming they were sure that he came especially from God—as we are; this adoration and conviction they associated with God's special influence and intention in his birth—as we do; but they phrased it in terms of a biological miracle that our modern minds cannot use. So far from thinking that they have given up anything vital in the New Testament's attitude toward Jesus, these Christians remember that the two

men who contributed most to the Church's thought of the divine meaning of the Christ were Paul and John, who never even distantly allude to the virgin birth.

This on the surface would appear to be a formidable indictment. But we shall see that, when closely examined and taken to pieces, it is a boomerang upon the head of the objector.

This is what Dr. Orr says:

It is true that Matthew and Luke give us a full record of the virgin birth. But has any one the right to assume that Paul and John knew nothing about it because their writings contain no specific reference to it? [Dr. Fosdick evidently so assumes]. Who knew of it to begin with? Joseph and Mary of course alone knew the facts fully and intimately. They alone could give authentic and complete narratives regarding them such as we possess. But can we stop here? There was at least one other that knew of the facts in some degree—I mean Mary's kinswoman, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist. Shortly after the angel's announcement to herself Mary paid Elizabeth a visit to the hill-country of Judea . . . and Elizabeth in an excess of inspiration "filled with the Holy Ghost" greeted Mary as the blessed among women and mother of her Lord. She went on: "Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her of the Lord." Mary moved by like inspiration responded in the hymn we call the Magnificat. Here then, we have one person who certainly did know that Mary was, by divine power, to be the mother of the Christ. (Orr.—*The Virgin Birth*—pp. 92, 93.)

This great authority further states:

The shepherds who visited the new-born Savior knew nothing of his miraculous birth; but they had a knowledge that the child born was Christ the Lord, and that extraordinary signs accompanied the birth. And they praised God. Further still, Simeon and Anna, at the presentation of Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem, knew how the babe born was the Lord's Christ . . . set the falling and rising again of many in Israel. (Luke 2:20). For various good reasons the miraculous conception was a matter that Mary and Joseph could not talk about openly to their friends. Delicacy forbade it.

But as we have seen, God revealed it to others of His saints, and the glorious news became the common possession of all the disciples. Indeed it is the Holy Spirit only who can show us the truth of this sacred mystery. We shall see that Dr. Fosdick's argument from the alleged silence of John and Paul is really no argument at all.

But to come direct to Dr. Fosdick's argument from the alleged silence of Paul and John. Silence can hardly affirm or deny. Matthew and Luke are two good witnesses and any court would hang a preacher on the testimony of two witnesses. Why then argue against these two witnesses from the silence of Paul and John?

Take John: What does he really say? "The Word became flesh." (John 1. 14.) How it became flesh he does not tell.

✂ Do not his words assume an exceptional mode of birth? Are they not presumptive evidence of what the other gospel writers so plainly reveal? It would be as reasonable to argue that John's words meant to deny that Jesus was ever born at all as that he meant to deny that His birth was such as Luke and Matthew describe. . . . John had the gospel of Matthew and Luke in his hand when he wrote his Gospel, at a time when the Virgin Birth was already a general article of belief in the Church. Doubtless John knew of the Virgin Birth. Does he repudiate it? No. Does he contradict it? No. Does he correct it? No. Then we have a right to believe that he accepted it. Such a story, if untrue, would have been a slur on Mary's good name, and John, who was commissioned by Jesus to care for his mother, would have resented the slander. (Orr.)

PURPOSE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

But the purpose John had in mind in writing his gospel throws light on this whole matter. The supreme heresy to John was the denial that "Jesus Christ had come in the flesh," and his marvelous book is a refutation of that heresy. With one stroke of his pen he be-

gins with the Divinity of Christ, "In the beginning was the Word," and the unity of Christ the eternal Son with the Father, "and the Word was with God," and the Deity of the Son, "and the Word was God." Then he proceeds to show throughout his Gospel the glory, authority and power of the eternal Son of God. The whole book assumes a miraculous birth.

PURPOSE OF PAUL'S EPISTLE

Now a word as to Dr. Fosdick's reference to the alleged silence of Paul. I think it will be seen that this, the greatest of the Apostles, believed and taught the supernatural origin of the Son of God in our Humanity.

What was Paul's main purpose in writing his epistles to the churches, whose members believed in the supernatural birth of Jesus? His purpose was not so much to recall the incidents in Christ's life, (that had already been done by the other writers) incidents with which he and the Christians were familiar. His great purpose centers in the fact of Christ's atoning death and resurrection. These were his great compelling themes. Paul who knew of the Virgin Birth saw clearly that its greatest defense was found in the death and resurrection of Christ, in short, in the person and work of Christ. To Paul

the Incarnation rested on its own evidence as seen in Christ's matchless character, and as attested by the resurrection. On these facts therefore Paul builds, and not on so essentially private and delicate a nature as the Virgin Birth. Did Paul know about the birth from a virgin? of course he did, for Luke, who narrates it in his Gospel, was the travelling companion of Paul and everything Luke knew of this matter Paul knew. (Orr).

Paul speaks of "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin condemned sin in the flesh." And, "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men." These

words pre-suppose a supernatural birth. Note them: God "sends" His Son; Christ "empties" Himself, "taking the form of a servant," is "made," or "in the likeness of men." "The thought is: The Son of God voluntarily enters our nature, yet there is a clear distinction between His Deity and humanity here suggested. He is one of us yet not of us. Paul's thought here could be put in Luke's phrase, 'that holy thing that shall be born,' because God is in His origin."

Or note Paul's remarkable passage: Gal. 4:4. "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law." I am sure that from these passages Dr. Fosdick is quite in error in saying that Paul did not even "distantly allude" to the Virgin Birth or incarnation of the Son of God, and that he cannot fairly use what he terms the silence of Paul and John to disapprove that great miracle.

OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PREDICTIONS

We can only discuss briefly the Messianic predictions as found in the Old Testament. Suffice it to say that these are numerous, and set forth the fact of our Lord's advent and work of redemption. The first prophecy is found in Genesis: 3:15. The seed of the woman "shall bruise" the serpent's head, not the seed of the man. And in Isaiah: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," (Isa. 7:14). And again, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. . . . The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6-7). Even the place of his birth was foretold. "But thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto

me, who is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Mich. 5:2). And the remarkable description of Christ as given in the 53rd Ch. of Isaiah, in which he is presented as the suffering servant of Jehovah, bearing and carrying away by his own stripes and death the sins of humanity, and numerous other striking prophecies, all of which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

WITNESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Time also fails me to discuss fully the witness of the early church. I would remind you that the whole Church, with the exception of one or two schismatic sects, the Ebionites, who were apostate Jewish Christians, and the Gnostics, both of whom later became practically extinct, all bore witness—yes, thousands of them bore witness, even unto death, to our Saviour's miraculous birth and resurrection.

And the early Church, not simply believed it, but stated it as a doctrinal fact of the highest importance, by the acceptance of which a genuine Christianity is distinguished from a spurious. The Apostles Creed, which dates back to the first century, affirms it. So says Harnack, Zahn, and Kattenbusch. There we find the article: Who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary. Ireneus writes in 175 A. D.: The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world. . . , has received from the Apostles and their disciples this faith. She believes in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. . . and in One Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets and dispensations of God, and the advent, and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion and the resurrection from the dead, etc. (Iren. 1, 10; cf. iii. 4; IV, 35). (Orr).

One of the earliest writers is Ignatius (about 100 A.D.) He speaks of the birth from a virgin as one of the three mysteries of renown, wrought in the silence of God. Stop your ears, he says to the Trallians, when anyone speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended

from David and also of Mary; and again to the Ephesians, he says: "For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, but of the Holy Ghost."

These words show that this faith was accepted by the whole Church in the first century. Ignatius gives good advice for the churches today when they hear an attack upon this truth from the pulpit. Doubtless, if the members of the First Presbyterian Church were as well informed regarding this great matter, as were the Christians in Ignatius' time, they would refuse not only to support with their gifts such a ministry, they would have vacated the edifice when Dr. Fosdick's sermon was being delivered, and leave the Professor to preach it to the empty walls and his own exaggerated ego. Had they done their full duty, they would have locked that sacred place against any preacher who would attempt to snatch the crown of Deity from the brow of the Son of God.

EXAMINATION OF PAGAN MYTHS

Now I ask you to return with me and note some further facts regarding the old pagan myths which Dr. Fosdick uses to belittle the Virgin Birth of Christ, and note the dissimilarity between these ancient pagan myth stories and the New Testament records of our Lord's birth as found in Matthew and Luke. This is a very important part of our discussion. For years the critics of the Virgin Birth have been laboring to prove that these pagan myths and fables constitute the background and foundation for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. You saw how Dr. Fosdick classed them all as on a common level. What then are the facts as to these myths and fables? Our opponent labors to convince the Christian people that the powerful impressions made by Jesus upon the disciples led them to worship Him and accept Him as Son of God and Messiah from heaven, and

that he would return on the clouds; and so he argues that the pagan myths furnished to them an illustration of our Lord's mode of coming into this world. In other words, the story of the Virgin Birth is simply their poetic description of the greatness of Jesus.

Dr. Fosdick does not base his objection to the Virgin Birth of Christ on the alleged discrepancies between the two accounts as given by Matthew and Luke, for he probably knows that these accounts have been shown, by biblical scholars, to be independent and complementary and not contradictory as shallow critics have affirmed them to be. Matthew tells the story from Joseph's point of view, and Luke from Mary's point of view, and the one supplements and completes the other, and both together are needed to give the whole story. Neither does our opponent attack the genealogical records as is sometimes done by superficial readers of these accounts, for he probably, also, knows that the Jews always traced the line of descent through the father who was the legal head of the family. "It is true that the genealogies present problems, but these do not touch the central fact of the belief of Matthew and Luke in the birth from a Virgin." These problems, however, have been cleared up. Dr. Fosdick knowing that he could not speak of contradictions in a case like this, directs his attack from another angle. He believes that he can disprove the Virgin Birth by arguing from the use made in those times of myths and fables. He says:

Pythagoras, Plato, and Augustus Caesar, and others, were called virgin born.

But what are the facts? The pagans believed that the gods could come to earth and co-habit with women. Their conceptions as to this are, perhaps, the most base and revolting thing we find in literature, ancient or modern. A degraded pagan god comes to a pure family and takes the wife, or sister, or daughter, the one which best

suits his lust, and for the time being makes her his wife, and then the offspring of this adulterous god is a superman, a god-man, a hero. So debasing are these myths that in one case we find that a god, Zeus by name, tells how he co-habited with a maiden by transforming himself first into the form of a serpent. Soltau tells us that Alexander testified that he

was begotten of a serpent co-habiting with his mother, that he was not the bodily son of Philip.

And Soltau also tells us, that the Emperor Augustus was careful that the fable should be widely diffused to the effect that his mother was once, while asleep in the temple of Apollo, visited by the god in the form of a serpent, and that in the tenth month afterwards he himself was born. . . . The Emperor did everything in his power to spread the belief that Apollo was his father. (Orr).

But in these ridiculous stories there is no suggestion that Alexander's mother or Augusta's mother was a virgin. In fact, no ancient pagan writers claimed virgin birth for any one of their heroes. They did claim that their heroes, as Alexander, Caesar, and others, were sons of the gods, but for them there was made no claim of virgin birth. These pagan gods are presented as having carnal relations with women, and the issue were great heroes, but there is no claim made that these heroes were virgin born. This is the fact regarding those revolting myths which Dr. Fosdick places on an equality with the Virgin Birth of our Divine Lord.

It should be said that such stories are the merest buffoonery, and the wisest and best people in the ancient pagan nations did not believe them. Who, except a politician, who sought to win the adoration of the people, would say that his father was a god in the shape of a serpent, or ox, or bird, or lover? That would be as absurd as the present-day claim of the school of rationalists, to which Dr. Fosdick belongs, that we are all the offspring of monkeys, apes and lizards. Thus Ter-

tullian, the Church father, who was familiar with these pagan myths, in addressing himself to the pagans, says:

God's own Son was born,—but not so born as to make Him ashamed of the name of Son, or of His paternal origin. It was not his lot to have as His father, by incest with a sister or by violation of a daughter, or another's wife, a god in the shape of a serpent, or ox, or bird, or lover for his vile end transforming himself into the gold of Danaus. These are your divinities upon whom these base deeds of Jupiter were done.

My friends, what is the inescapable conclusion, if Dr. Fosdick is right? Is it not this: that the Jews are right to-day, and have been for 1900 years, as they were in Pilate's Hall when they cried, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." They hurled their anathemas at Jesus then because they did not believe in the Virgin Birth, in His claim to be the Son of God, and that He would appear the second time. And Dr. Fosdick is an ally of that tenacious unbelief that has ever cried, "Crucify Him!" If Dr. Fosdick is right, our faith is a colossal delusion, we are of all men most pitiable, for his Christ is only a "poor deluded Jewish peasant, born out of wedlock, quickly put away and never to return," and Unitarianism should become the universal religion. But thank God Dr. Fosdick's claim is false. I think we have seen clearly the utter groundlessness of his argument to disprove the Virgin Birth of Christ.

You see that this great Church father Tertullian was showing these pagans that there was no ground of comparison between their revolting myths and the Gospel records of the Virgin Birth of Christ. Yet Dr. Fosdick places them on an equality. Dr. Gore says:

None of the pagan writers cited refers to Plato as born of a virgin.

And Dr. Orr, as already shown, affirms that no pagan writer of any note for at least 200 or 300 years ever claimed that Buddha was virgin born. I have never read a piece of literature, of the same compass, as Dr.

Fosdick's sermon, in which I have found so many misleading statements. Was his deception intentional? But this is characteristic of the arguments used by the religious liberalists in their attempts to disprove the Deity of Christ.

It should be observed that even some of the most noted of the extreme critics, like Dr. Cheyne and Gunkel, have given up this explanation regarding the origin of the alleged virgin birth of our Lord, as taught by Dr. Fosdick, though all the school of rationalists reject the Virgin Birth of Christ. And I would again stress the fact that the decent and most intelligent people in Greece and Rome were ashamed of these myth stories and repudiated them.

Plato would have banished these stories from his Republic. They were as Tertullian tells us, the subjects of public ridicule. It is a strange imagination that can suppose that these foul tales could be taken over by the Church, and in the short space before the writing of our Gospels, become the inspiration of the beautiful and chaste narratives of Matthew and Luke. (Orr).

DR. FOSDICK'S "NEW KNOWLEDGE?"

Now my friends, we should know that this attack upon Christianity is really not modern, that there is nothing new in this treacherous argument against the divine honor and Deity of our Lord, for it is as old as the Church. Dr. Fosdick, in his sermon, would have you believe that his teaching is based on "new knowledge" regarding the "universe and its origin" and on the life of Christ, unknown to the scholars in ages past. But he has not given us any facts to prove that he is in possession of any "new knowledge." He pits the rationalists against the orthodox people and labors to convince the Christians everywhere that the latter are "static," "mechanical," "reactionary," "medieval" in their thinking regarding the Bible and lamentably ignorant as to the real Christ. Has he any "new knowledge" as to the "origin of the universe"

aside from the two speculative hypotheses, the planetary and nebular? I Challenge Him to Submit it! As a matter of fact the "origin of the universe" is as much a mystery today as it was in the long ago, and only as we accept Revelation, as given in the Bible, do we know anything about this great matter. But this man has rejected Revelation, as given in the Bible, consequently, to get his speculations and denials of God's Word across he indulges in loud sounding words which deceive only the ignorant.

IGNATIUS GIVES A CHARACTER SKETCH

Ignatius, the Church father, who lived about 90 to 150 A.D., accurately describes Dr. Fosdick and his school of rationalists. He says to the Trallians:

I therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, intreat you that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. (1st Cor. 1:10.) For there are some vain talkers and deceivers, not Christians, but Christ betrayers, bearing about the name of Christ in deceit, and, "corrupting the word (1. Cor. 1:10) of the Gospel; while they intermix the poison of their deceit with their persuasive talk, as if they mingled æonite with sweet wine, that so he who drinks, being deceived in his taste by the very sweetness of the draught, may incautiously meet with his death. One of the ancients gives us this advice: Let no man be called good, who mixes good with evil! For they speak of Christ not that they may preach Christ but that they may reject Christ. . . . They also calumniate his being born of a Virgin; they are ashamed of his Cross; they deny his Passion; and they do not believe his Resurrection. . . . They suppose Christ to be unbegotten. . . . Some of them say that Christ is a mere man, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are but the same person, and that the creation is the work of God, not by Christ, but by some other power. (Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians, Ch. VI.)

One would imagine that this character sketch was made in our present age by a keen, disgusted university

or seminary student or member of a church where modernism is taught, so accurately does Ignatius describe our modern Arians.

JEKYLL AND HYDE THEOLOGIAN

I think I have given you a revelation of the Jekyll and Hyde type of character in the realm of modern religion. It is not possible, as a psychological explanation, that the honored mothers of our rationalists read Jekyll and Hyde during the days of their maternity and thus produced those double characters, those apparent saints, yet perverters of the truth. No, that is not the explanation. It is rather found in the character of the training our young men receive in many of our colleges and theological seminaries. I knew the teacher—the late Dr. W. N. Clarke—who shaped the thinking of Dr. Fosdick. I studied theology for three years under Dr. Clarke, in the same seminary where Dr. Fosdick was a student, and, fortunately, I knew my Bible sufficiently, before I knew Clarke, to be qualified to discern rationalism when I met it. The fountain heads of our present-day education—the college and seminary—constitute our problem.

You ought to know that these modernists can talk unctiously about the meek and lowly Jesus, the love of God, human brotherhood, the glory of character, and all that. Similarly Ingersoll also was wont to eulogize character while he would cut its tap-root. They have imbibed the ethical spirit of Christianity, and while they continually handle “the Word of God deceitfully,” yet they veneer their false teaching by the use of our Christian terms, which terms they have stolen, and in which they have put a new content, so that they almost “deceive the very elect.” Dr. Fosdick has even gone so far as to call the fundamental truths of our holy religion, as the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, the Resurrection, etc., only the “dead-line around the Christian Church.”

THE RATIONALISTS' OBJECTIVE

But what is the objective that Dr. Fosdick and the rationalists have in view? It is generally believed that this movement is strongly supported by a well-known financial magnate, who is backing it in most of the leading denominations, in the Y. M. C. A., and Y. W. C. A., in subsidized educational institutions and press, and through timid and active servants on mission and church boards. What is their objective? First, it is the uniting of Protestantism; second, the uniting of Christendom—Roman, Greek, and Protestant; and third, the establishing of a universal brotherhood—the federation of the world—when all class hatred and strife will have ceased, and the race will have found itself finally evolved into the millennium. In short, it is a great “Church Trust” that this financial magnate and the descendants from the jungle have in view.

Well, if this is their objective, does it not seem that their attack upon fundamental Christian truths is suicidal to its attainment? Would it not appear that a defense of the great truths of the Bible would tend to accelerate the much desired Christian unity for which saints of God earnestly pray?

Dr. Fosdick charges the orthodox people with turning the “churches into cock-pits,” because they would “contend earnestly for the faith.” But by his attacks upon the inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Atonement and other fundamental Christian truths, he is healing the breaches in Protestantism and bringing a glorious unity in sight! That is like a neighbor professing a passionate love for peace and good fellowship in his neighborhood while placing dynamite beneath the homes in his block. Dr. Fosdick is attacking the Bible, its miracles, Saviour, etc., while crying “unity,” “fellowship,” “brotherhood,” “love”! “Consistency thou art a jewel.” Let us hope that the rationalists will

soon learn that "Truth crushed to earth will rise again."

If the above financial magnate would reveal a fraction of the same shrewdness in his agitation for church union that he and his associates have shown in creating a monopoly of business, they would quickly change their tactics. But having rejected the Word of God it is a humble path to return to the truth. Will the rationalists repent and return? The modernists have done more in recent years to retard the movement toward Protestant solidarity than has any force or sect in all the history of the Christian Church. The first great step toward Church union is an acknowledgment of the Bible as the veritable Word of God. Here the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic and ninety per cent. of the Protestant churches stand. The rationalists are a divisive, destructive element. They cannot succeed. Unity can only be attained as a result of absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ. Crown Him as Lord and Saviour, and honor and submit to His infallible Word, and the first long step will have been taken toward a true Christian fellowship and brotherhood. But fulminating in pulpits and press and universities for a new Christian brotherhood, while kindling fires of discord in the churches and educational institutions by their attacks upon the Bible is not the road on which to reach so great a goal. God will see to it that true progress in that direction shall not be made by a rationalistic propaganda.

Bishop Warren A. Candler of Atlanta, in the Florida Christian Advocate, says:

Dr. Fosdick is a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, and in 1919 he published in the Atlantic Monthly an article fiercely attacking the orthodox churches and predicting their revolution or overthrow by the soldiers as soon as the heroic boys were returned from France. His friend and associate, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had published a similar paper in the Saturday Evening Post of February 9th, 1918, under the caption: 'The Christian Church, What of Its Future?' and broadcasted it over the land in pamphlet form 'with the compliments' of

the opulent author. The predictions of Dr. Fosdick and Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., have utterly failed. The soldiers who were Christians, and survived the war, have gone to work in the church as aforetime. If any change is noticeable it is their increased zeal and confident faith. The churches which these two prophets assured the public would have to abandon their creed or perish have done neither, but are more prosperous than ever.

Having failed as a prophet, Dr. Fosdick returns as a 'sapper and miner' to the task of overthrowing the orthodox Christianity of our country. As a Baptist preacher he fulminates from a Presbyterian pulpit his radical utterances. Well, he can succeed no better in his present plan than he did as a prophet. Once the people and preachers know who he is and what he is up to, the danger from anything he has said or may say will have passed.

A COMMON CANARD EXPOSED

But Dr. Fosdick declares that the scholarship of the world is on the side of the rationalists, and that those who hold their views are as devout and noble in Christian character as are the evangelical hosts who constitute ninety per cent. of the Christian people. In fact, he labors to give the impression that unless you agree with the rationalists you will become an intellectual fossil, "guilty of crucifying your highest intelligence." Such statements do not merit a denial.

With his sermon sent out to the pastors, someone had a slip enclosed in which the claim is made that Dr. Fosdick is preaching to the largest congregation in New York, thus giving the impression that the people have gone over to his views; but he forgot to tell the public that Dr. Fosdick is preaching to a congregation composed of three churches, which united in the Old First Church, in which edifice only about 1,000 persons can be accommodated. This slip did not state that when Dr. Fosdick preached in the Town Hall in this City, after having been widely advertised by the Church Federation, he succeeded in gathering about 300 persons. We make no boast of this: but here in Tent Evangel we

are preaching to as many persons as could be accommodated twice over in the First Presbyterian Church, and we have been repeating this for twenty years, though I had no intention of parading this fact all over America. True Christians detest such an exhibition of ego. Those who truly know Christ do not resort to such misleading exhibitions of the flesh, and I must apologize for even making mention of such a matter on this platform.

But let us examine more closely the charge that the Evangelical people are the enemies of science and learning. When, in the modern world, did the greatest revival of learning begin? Was it not with the Protestant Reformation in Europe? And who were the leaders in this movement? Were they not Orthodox Christians whose teachings Dr. Fosdick has repudiated? But the children of those reformers, who make up ninety per cent. of Protestantism today, Dr. Fosdick classed with the Roman Catholic Hierarchy that condemned to death Galileo for declaring that the earth is round. How puerile is such an utterance, I will leave you to judge. Have we not inherited our modern political and religious freedom largely from the evangelical people who constitute Orthodox Christianity? Were not Savonarola and Luther and Huss and Knox and Latimer and Cranmer and Zwingli and Cromwell and Wesley and Gladstone and Roger Williams and most of the Pilgrims, Puritans, and fathers of the American Revolution, and the Orthodox Churches that led in the emancipation of the slaves, and millions beside, who suffered and bled and died for the world's political and spiritual freedom, all Orthodox Protestants? Dr. Fosdick knows they were, yet he throws it into our face that Evangelical Protestantism is an apostle of "ignorance" and "reaction."

THE RATIONALISTS' CONTRIBUTION

What contribution have the rationalists made to our store of knowledge? They have given us Spinoza, who was the father of modern pantheism; they have given us Tom Paine, the infidel, who was the American pioneer in destructive criticism of the Bible; they have given us Wellhausen, who created the system that has poisoned our modern religious education; they have given us Theodore Parker the father of American Unitarianism, a system of denial of the Holy Scriptures that disrupted Congregationalism in New England, and turned most of her educational institutions over to rationalism; they have given us our present-day Union Seminary, that has been disowned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; they have corrupted many of our modern universities in which the authority of God's Word is rejected; they have given us our exploiters of labor who are striving to subject our churches and educational institutions to the control of a great financial power and which has brought upon the churches, by their subtle denials of Christ's miraculous birth, atonement, resurrection and coming again, the greatest problem the churches have ever had to encounter; they have given us their unproved doctrine of Darwinian evolution, that man has descended from fish, lizards, apes and monkeys; they have turned our sacred edifices into places of amusement, and our pulpits over to Christ rejectors, dealers in social platitudes; they have divided the churches into warring camps, thus forcing us into a struggle to save Christianity, not from the old infidelity outside but from the more dangerous infidelity now inside the Church of God. And the rationalists have also given us the philosophy of Marxian, economic evolution and revolution, which has borne fruit in the modern political

anarchist, the communist, the bolshevist, who have prostrated and strangled Russia to her political death, and who have produced our political criminals that wreck our trains, burn our factories, murder our peaceful citizens, turn our country that protects them into a charnel house of death, and replace the Stars and Stripes, the emblem of liberty and justice, with the dyed-in-hell red rag of an army of fiends incarnate. That is what Dr. Fosdick's school of rationalism, evolution, and a subtle denial of the fundamental truths of the Bible has contributed to our modern civilization.

Is it true that Orthodox Christianity is the enemy of "progress," "new knowledge," "education"? I repudiate the charge! Allow me to submit to you a list of names furnished by Rev. Harris Gregg, names that are unparalleled in the annals of fame, all of whom were advocates of Orthodox Christianity.

First: Among lawyers and statesmen accustomed to weigh evidence, and who believed in the Son of God, his virgin birth and redeeming death: Grotius, Bacon, Sir Matthew Hale, Cromwell, Blackstone, John Seldon, Sir William Jones, Lord Lyttleton, Gladstone, John Bright, Earl Cairns, George Washington, Chief Justice Marshall, Chancellor Kent, Judge Story, Chief Justice Parsons, Greenleaf, Clay, Webster, Seward, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt.

Second: Among scientists who have believed in the virgin birth and redeeming death of Christ: Sir Isaac Newton, Leibnitz, Sir John Herschell, Linnæus, Kepler, Pascal, Davy, Faraday, Cuvier, Boyle; Doctors Harvey Sydenham, Boerhaave, Rush, Simpson, Lionel Beale and Howard Kelly; the Duke of Argyle, David Brewster, Prof. Dana, Prof. Hitchcock, Prof. Mitchell, Prof. Romanes, Prof. G. Frederick Wright, Hugh Miller, Prof. Guyot, Louis Pasteur, Kelvin, Sir William Dawson and 617 members of the British Scientific Society, whose paper is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Literature, spending itself largely in the realms of the imaginative faculty, and philosophy, losing itself in the labyrinth of its tangled, empty reasonings, and scholastic dialect, ever remaining in its own blind alleys, refuse to be bound to historical evidence, and know little or nothing of the training of exact

mathematics, and yet Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Addison, Samuel Johnson and Coleridge, all believed in the Bible; and last but not least Sir Walter Scott said: 'Christ is the Archetype of both the Bible and Nature.' On his deathbed he said: 'Bring me the Book.' 'What Book?' inquired his physician. 'There is but one Book,' was the reply of that immortal.

But Dr. Fosdick would have you believe that orthodox Christianity is the foe of science, education, knowledge, of modern culture.

John Locke spent the last fourteen years of his life reading only the Bible. Hegel's philosophy has spread pantheism into higher criticism in Bible study, Unitarianism in religion, Reformed Judaism in Israel, Evolution in Science, and Marxian Socialism and Bolshevism in the world's social life. Hegel was the follower of Spinoza, the follower of the Greek philosophers, the follower of the Spiritualism of the magicians of Egypt and Babylon. And yet Hegel on his deathbed would allow only the Bible to be read to him. And Huxley requested that Christ's resurrection chapter (I Cor. 15) be read at his grave.

The highest and final reach of man's fallen mind is, God must be. It cannot reach further. But this leaves man lost and God unknown. But the primary message of God's Word is "I Am," which brings God's personality and presence to us, with its light, life and love. This is God's adjustment to our spiritual, mental, moral, physical, temporal and eternal need.

Jesus Christ says:

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Are not such words as these a sequel to the Virgin Birth?

Who is this Christ whom the rationalists reject, from whose thorn-pierced brow they would wrench the crown of Deity? Who is He?

He is the Author of the Book that declares Him to be the unique Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, the Incarnate Son, as predicted by prophets, declared by Himself, by His disciples, by trustworthy historical records, by the Holy Spirit, by the presence of Jews among Gentile na-

tions, by the Bible among the various peoples and tribes in over 600 languages, by the gifts of spiritual and eternal life, as a matter of experience and proof, by His offer of eternal life to all who will take it, among all classes, ages and nations, by His salvation which meets the universal consciousness of sin and need, by His atonement which proclaims God's righteousness and reveals His love and grace for sinful men, by His promise of the resurrection and complete salvation for body, soul and spirit.

Can the one who denies the Virgin Birth believe any of these truths about Jesus Christ? No! Can he see the messianic, prophetic, scientific and moral unity and glory of Christ and His truth? No! Can he see that Christ is the "Supreme Theme," "Perfect Example," "Final Witness," "Channel of Life and Blessing," "Executor of Judgments," "Fulfiller of Covenants," the only Hope of the world? No!

Ah, no, my friends! Destroy this truth, which is the secret of all that is noblest in our civilization, and you veil the face of God, shut out the Sun of hope and comfort from the life of Man, and our sorrowing, suffering world will again return to savagery. But, thank God, "the Light has come." "The people that sat in darkness saw a great Light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death Light is sprung up." (Matt. 4:14). The immortal Tennyson had the vision of the Christ incarnate when he wrote:

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Though we who have not seen Thy face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

God be praised, the Incarnation is a fact! What glory, fellowship, joy and peace for men! We have found the Father! "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," said Jesus Christ. Because "the Word became flesh" in the womb of the Holy Virgin, we can now anchor our faith to His covenant which He sealed by His own precious blood and attested by

His resurrection, that "Unto them that look for him, shall he appear again the second time, apart from sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28.) Therefore, lift up your heads, O saints of God, and shout aloud with the song of triumph:

All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.

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